

NOTES ON CONVERSATION WITH  
MR. FRANK WEITZEL, GAO.,  
6/22/65

Taken by Mr. J. F. Davison

Mr. Weitzel believed that the Faculty had many contacts with the Board of Trustees re the selection of a new President. But these contacts were not through the formal channels alone but came unsolicited from many Faculty members to Trustees on a personal basis by means of letters and phone calls to out-of-town Trustees. He felt, and others felt, that these numerous contacts, especially with regard to John A. Brown Jr. were not helpful for an understanding by the Trustees of the problems or for John A. Brown's status.

In the past, Mr. Weitzel thought that the relations of the President of the University with the Trustees suffered from too much presidential centralization of control, which started with President Marvin, but had not significantly changed under President Carroll or under President Colclough. All tended to conceal from the Board their real problems and the bad aspects of university activities. They were pleased to produce an operating surplus from fees and not look for too much expansion or reform. The Deans' forward-looking education plans of the Deans last December had not been given to the Board. He had two copies received informally. He thinks it states well the problems of the University, would endorse it, and thinks the Board and the new President should read and consider it.

With regard to the proposed appointment for John A. Brown Jr, opposition was created in the Board by 1) too many Faculty and alumni calls out of channels, 2) the Deans' letters of May 8 and June 1 were not helpful, and 3) a lingering resentment of the way T.H.C. handled the appointment as Dean of Faculties in March 1964 - - -

The committee explained to Mr. Weitzel how that appointment originated.

With regard to the Special Delivery letter of June 2, mailed June 3 from NW Ellison to Board members, merely contained Elliott dossier and expression that he would probably be the candidate recommended by the Trustees Committee at the meeting on June 5. (Conversation with Mr. Van Story with contact agrees with this interpretation of the text.) *but indicates words used were "I feel certain that Dr Elliott will be the candidate of the Trustees Committee"*

At the Board meeting on June 5, 1965, the vote on Elliott was taken only after Dr. Brown and Dr. Schmidt had given the Faculty Committee views and letters from the Deans had been read to the full Board. Mr. Weitzel recalled the applause after the Brown speech, found the other speech confusing and not well received, too many unimportant details related without clear purpose.

With regard to the Ad Hoc Committee on Athletics report, the Board found the figures not conclusive. The figures on costs were admittedly high and increasing but they thought a better presentation of games would improve attendance and revenues. Reductions of costs as necessary!

The Trustees Committee interviewed Deans of Men and Women, the Student Council and the Hatchet group, explored problems of retaining membership in Southern Conference if football should be dropped. The Report indicated GWU probable expulsion. Georgetown University thought The George Washington University would have a difficult time maintaining a full schedule in other sports without parochial college and school relationships.

The Board admits need of new facilities for athletics and social affairs, meals, advises immediate plan and construction of Student Union and Athletics Building or Field House. Plan for the latter from an Activities Fee. The Committee raised the

question of how much and who to pay fee. Mr. Weitzel and the Committee do not know about that or where money to build can come from. So it is urgent to go ahead and confirm that architects already authorized to plan and have conference with Student Life Committee.

With regard to the Senate resolution regarding salaries and Status 3 in the AAUP scale of ratings, the matter was urgently submitted to the Board and given most sincere consideration. Without money to be foreseen they cannot guarantee increases on basis of years of service. The Committee pointed out it was not the plan but a minimum scale which was recommended. The Board could not commit the University without sources of money being apparent.

When questioned as to how to build without money, but not how to retain the Faculty, Mr. Weitzel could only answer the students' welfare was so urgent now.

With regard to the future, the Middle States is a real crisis as to Faculty-Board of Trustees relations.

Mr. Weitzel said we all must try at once to repair the damage of the last year's events. Hopes Elliott arrives soon and establishes good relations with Mr. Brown and other deans and chairmen. Mr. Weitzel feels past relations were poor between the President and the Faculty, and also the President and the Board. He feels sure that President Elliott is a man of such fine quality that he will realize this need and achieve better relations quickly.

We echo this hope but indicate that all reports on Elliott to date are negative as to this real possibility. Mr. Weitzel remains idealistically hopeful.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

6 July 1965

Dear Dean Burns:

The attached is a transcript of the notes taken on June 30 when you were interviewed by Professor Wood's committee. They are to be used only for the internal affairs of the Committee and will not be attributed to you in any report without your permission.

If you care to delete anything, add anything or correct anything, please do so and return to Mrs. Brosnan, Registrar's Office, marked "Personal" please.

*Ruth B. Brosnan*  
Ruth B. Brosnan  
Secretary

*A few corrections.*  
*DE Burns*

The Committee of Inquiry met at 10:30 a.m., June 30, 1965 in Dean Burns office for the purpose of receiving his recollections of the events surrounding the selection of President Elliott against the recommendations of the Faculty. Professor Wood and Professor J. F. Davison were present. Professor Wolfgang Kraus was absent.

There was a short discussion preceding this interview regarding the relative merits of the Committee completing its report before President Elliott's arrival or waiting for him to come down and getting his thoughts in the matter of Faculty-Trustee relationships. Dean Burns seemed to feel the Committee should not meet with Dr. Elliott, while the members of the Committee felt they should.

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Q. The point which the committee is most interested in is what made you go to Dean Linton's office. What motivated you?

A. Shortly before that at an Educational Policy Committee meeting - a week before - the President read a telegram which had been sent to Mr. Ellison by Mr. Ransom to the effect that he was no longer to be considered - he was <sup>bowling</sup> ~~buying~~ out. The President said it was too bad, but he was perfectly willing to continue as Acting President until someone else could be found. This suggested to Dean Burns, and others got the same impression, that the Trustees were not going to do anything. The status quo would continue. This disturbed Dean Burns and some of his colleagues and a day or two or three later, when word got around - Cal Linton talked to some people and then he told Dean Burns that the departmental chairmen asked him to call ~~on~~ <sup>a meeting</sup> on May 7 - and meanwhile Dean Burns was called by Charlie Cole saying that the chairmen were having a meeting, and many thought that the deans ought to meet to impress the Trustees with the need to resolve the whole situation. Cal read a letter - a draft of a letter he would read to the group - and Dean Burns thought it was too long and too argumentative so he drafted a letter which was to go to the Trustees to make their thinking known. Dean Burns called Dean Linton a half hour before the meeting. He said (Dean Linton), "This is good. I won't even bring mine." They went to the meeting. Tom Brown read off his discussion and there was talking. He read a letter from Courtland Perkins (which was sent to Arthur Miller, Secretary of the Committee.) About a quarter to one, Cal called on Dean Burns. (He, (Linton), had been designated Chairman of the meeting) Dean Burns said we should communicate with the Trustees and they approved it (the letter) and it was sent to the Trustees.

Q. Did this endorse rather heavily the appointment of John A. Brown?

A. Two things: 1) we needed an early resolution of the matter. Preservation of the status quo would be damaging, and 2) we think John A. Brown is qualified and urge his appointment as ~~Vice~~ <sup>(sic)</sup> President.

Q. Had you known about the feelings of the Trustees on John A. Brown?

A. About two months before, Mr. Ellison had a luncheon meeting and invited five deans to it. Hamblin, Mason, Linton, Nutting and Burns. At that meeting, he stated in effect that he did not regard John A. Brown favorably for the presidency of the University and he gave at least one reason. He said he had mounted a campaign in his own behalf and this involved pressure on the trustees and especially Ellison and he did not like anyone who organized a campaign in his own behalf. (This meeting occurred some time in February or March.)

Dean Burns recounted an incident which occurred when Brown and Dean Burns had lunch at the American Council of Education. Clarke Kerr spoke at this luncheon. We were sitting with Brown at the end of the table when Gladfelter came up and greeted Brown. It was the first time Dean Burns had met Mr. Gladfelter and the first time Brown had done so and Mr. Gladfelter asked Mr. Brown about what was going on at the University.

*At this meeting*

Brown said the Faculty had elected a Committee and there was also a Trustees Committee. Gladfelter said why are they looking around? "They ought to appoint you. I am going to write to mutual friends and write to the Trustees in your behalf." This was completely spontaneous and could not be considered a campaign. Ellison said maybe he had misjudged the man.

Q. Did Ellison say he had made a mistake about J. A. Brown?

A. I do not know whether he ever made this admission. He just said maybe he had misjudged the man.

Q. Since it is known about the hostility to John A. Brown, it was thought that the Communication of the Deans and Chairmen would help him rather than hinder him?

A. Perhaps they did. When I met with Ellison on May 11 and presented this letter to him I told him that this meeting was called and the letter written without the knowledge of John A. Brown. He had nothing to do with the meeting.

Q. Did Mr. Ellison have advance information that this meeting had been called?

A. He had no advance information, Dean Burns thought, because he was out of town. The letter was written on Friday and it was still in Dean Linton's office for additional signatures on Monday. Dean Burns called Ellison on Monday but he was out of town. They wanted to present the letter to him before it went to the Trustees. His secretary said he was in New York. She had set up a tentative meeting on Tuesday. Later she called back and said it would not be convenient. So they set the meeting up for four o'clock. Later that day, shortly after lunch, Colclough got in touch with Dean Burns. He had heard about the letter apparently over the weekend.

Q. We have heard he knew about it on Friday?

A. There was an ODK meeting on Friday night and this may have been discussed. Dean Burns was not there. Stan Tracy heard about the letter at that meeting and told Dean Burns later. Tracy said he told Newell Ellison about this letter on Saturday. It was Monday that Colclough called about the letter. "What is the point of this?" Dean Burns told him the meeting was called on Friday and he thought it would be advisable to have something prepared for the meeting and that he had drafted this letter and Colclough obviously did not like this and wanted confidential information because Ellison was going to call him that day.

Q. One of the members of the Faculty Committee called Mr. Ellison Friday evening and Mr. Ellison had told Hughes to interview Elliott that day. This is remarkable, is it not?

A. Yes, because when we talked to Ellison at 4 o'clock, Tuesday, May 11, he said at that time there are two people who are in effect final candidates for the job - one is Ransom and one is Brown. There might be another one, Elliott, who is being interviewed by Hughes in New York.

Q. Dean Burns was then told about a report that one of the deans had left the Dean's Meeting and gone to see Colclough.

A. I did not know about that.

Q. Why did you decide to address your communication to the Board rather than to the Faculty Committee?

A. The reason generally was that it was not Dean Burns' decision but a group decision.

If it went to the Faculty Committee, it would then go to the Trustees Committee and probably not go from there to the Trustees. So it was addressed to the Trustees. They presented the letter to Ellison as a matter of courtesy and he said he was impressed. He volunteered to send it. Dean Burns said yes because they thought it would be better coming from him. He called the next day and said the letter had been rephrased and was being sent out but he was not send<sup>m</sup> the letter showing the three people who had resigned from the Committee. REPRODUCED

Q. Looking at it objectively, was there any possible relationship between the letter of the three faculty members and the Friday meeting of the deans?

A. The letter was brought by Tom Brown to the meeting we had with Ellison. Cole, Linton, Brown and I met with Ellison. We had the letter signed by the Faculty. We presented the case to Ellison. Linton read the letter slowly to Ellison and then went down the list and called off the names of those who signed it and read over forty names, some of which were badly written. Linton then gave Ellison a copy of the letter from the three people. Ellison had a copy of it. He may have gotten it earlier.

(There is a statement here about Tom Brown's acting as Chairman of the Department of Medicine rather than as a member of the Faculty Committee.)

Q. Did Ellison lead you to believe that there was a good chance that Brown would be the final candidate because he did not believe Ransom was serious?

A. Ellison said Ransom was still interested. He said Ransom, Brown and Elliott, who was being interviewed that day in New York, were the candidates.

Q. We have heard someone called Ransom from Airlie House and the call was to the effect that the Faculty was strongly behind Brown and Ransom should know this - and if the Faculty were strongly behind Mr. Brown, Mr. Ransom said he did not wish to be considered?

DAVISON There is a question of Brown's being connected with Airlie House?

DAVISON This has something to do with David C. Green. The man who made the call is a former Episcopalian Rector who is intimate with Green. Green is a lay officer and he ~~kn~~ Ransom. His belief is that Ransom was out because of leakages of information. Apparently there was a call from Airlie House by the Assistant Executive officer. Green thought it was inappropriate to try to recruit someone over Jack Brown. Apparently, Ransom got into so much trouble because of leakages. The impression Green got was that if we had pressured him more aggressively, he would have taken the job.

Q. Have any of the deans had a chance to talk with Elliott?

A. I talked with him about a week before their meeting (approximately the 27th of May). This was the meeting of the Deans plus Herzog. Just talked for an hour.

Q. Did you write a letter giving your impression of Elliott? How did you expect this to be used.

A. I did not think about how it would be used at all. The President said he would like a very quick response - that day - I had it about a half hour after the meeting. He may have received my evaluation that day. My letter said that he was an agreeable, clean-cut looking type, quiet (possibly ~~ineffectual~~ <sup>inconsequential</sup>), but that his background training and work experience was not what we wanted at the University. Frankly, he is not the man for the job. What use was made of the letter I do not know. Some say they were read to the Trustees.

Q. Do any of the Deans feel that their jobs as deans have been seriously embarrassed by these activities. In case we meet Elliott, we would like to know \_\_\_\_\_?

A. I never heard anything like that. It has never been a personal matter. It is just a question of the best man for the job.

Q. Do you think J. A. Brown could work with Elliott? At least for a year or so until everything clears up?

A. He seemed an affable, agreeable, friendly type. Quite possibly, John A. Brown could work with him. It is hard to judge from a meeting of that type because he is under pressure. Obviously, he would be agreeable in a situation like that.

Q. Do you think he knows about the tension in this University that he would have to face?

A. He did not give me that impression, because there are obvious facts he clearly did not know about the University. He said he walked around, saw the place, but did not go in.

Q. Would it be desirable for him to see "Basic Considerations, etc." (Dean's Report)? We have been trying to get him to see this.

A. Well, I think Elliott ought to see that report.

Q. Do you know why it has not been distributed?

A. My personal belief is that the Acting President regards the report as a "negative and critical" report and as a consequence, he was angered by the deans for the report. In fact, it could be construed by him as criticism of his administration and his role in the University because it was negative, critical and possibly critical of him.

Q. Do you know what the Vice President and Treasurer thinks of it?

A. I don't know.

Q. Would it be generally to his thinking?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Would you be surprised to hear that the Board of Trustees had seen a copy?

A. It went to one of the Committees.

(Professor Davison mentioned it was given to Carmichael but not distributed by him) One member of the Board feels it was very constructive. He had seen it. He is a high official in government. He thinks it is fine. We asked Morris and Phillips about whether they had seen it. They said they wanted to see it.

Mr. Burns asked if the Trustees had received it yet and was told that the committee did not know.

Mr. Davison said that the University Objectives Committee had it, but we could not get it until the Committee finishes its report. There may be other difficulties.

Q. Should President Elliott see the report before he comes down here?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Did you ever think that the organizational set up between the Faculty Committee and the Trustees Committee was not good?

A. One of the Interim Reports of Tom Brown's suggests this, - but not from any member of the Faculty Committee.

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Q. How can/better communications system be set up between the two committees?

A. I really don't know. The degree of communication between committees depends on the willingness of both parties to communicate freely. People have to want to communicate.

Q. Professor Wood said he had gathered the impression that the Board is a fairly tightly run organization but it appears to him that there was a different desire on the part of the Chairman not to have completely free communication.

A. I have heard he felt this way.

Q. There was complete opportunity to communicate freely to the Chairman of the Board and they did communicate. But it made no impression on the final decision. It was announced so suddenly that some people feel they have been betrayed. Why did they make so little impression on the Board?

A. I have no idea.

Q. There were such opportunities to communicate. They seemed to have communicated their disapproval of J. Perkins and their approval of Courtland Perkins. Some people feel they have been deceived. Do you feel you have been misled?

A. When we talked with Ellison<sup>son</sup> on May 11, he said Brown would be one of two, possibly three, up for final consideration and he said his impression of Brown was improving. He was growing in stature. Generally, he indicated a more favorable impression of Brown. He did not say so, but we asked if he would go before the Trustees as a candidate. He said it might but he could not speak for the Board. We left thinking Mr. J. A. Brown had a fairly good chance of being President.

Q. You discussed this with Mr. Morris also?

A. Mr. Morris is a pleasant, agreeable man, and at our meeting he talked about the letter. We were filling him in about the letter. It was in the early part of that week that we met with Morris and he said he liked J. A. Brown, thought him a nice person, he was very fond of Mrs. Brown. He said the wife of a President was very important and Mrs. Brown is a real asset to Mr. Brown and he thought he would make a good President.

Q. Why did you see Morris?

A. We saw Ellison, then we saw the Vice Chairman, Mr. McKelway, and we made him (Mr. Morris) the third man to see.

Q. Were you aware that Morris and Phillips were meeting with the Faculty Committee at that time?

A. Yes, I heard that Mr. Morris was present with them when they met with the Faculty Committee.

Q. We have not been able to find any break in the solidarity of the Trustees. We do not feel that there was unanimous heartfelt support but they certainly give that impression. Do you know any Trustees who might have a more sympathetic view of the Faculty situation?



A. I do not know many of the Trustees. Jim Van Story seemed to be sympathetic. I saw him the night before the Trustees meeting and it was clear he was favorably disposed toward Jack Brown.

Q. Do you think the Trustees did not have any vote until after Tom Brown appeared to make his statement. There was such strong feeling. There seemed to be a unanimous vote of the Board. There was such strong support of Elliott?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you know anyone who was asked to accept the presidency during the last two weeks?

A. I have not been told by anyone who was approached. I did hear that Ellison was reported to have talked to people.

Q. Did you hear to whom?

A. Yes, Allan Carter.

Q. Would you be surprised to hear that as late as June 2, it was necessary to send around a dossier of Elliott to members of the Board?

A. I heard this.

Q. How would you interpret such a communication to members of the Board?

A. I would interpret it as tantamount to a recommendation of Elliott.

(It was probably carefully drafted, such a communication to members of the Board from ~~xxxxxx~~ the Chairman of the Board, could be interpreted  
(The secretary does not know whose statement this was.)  
as a recommendation in favor of Elliott)

Q. Those who received it were not members of the inside group. Is this reprehensible or is it normal?

A. No reply recorded.

Q. Professor Wood said that the Faculty Advisory Committee were themselves rather impressed with Elliott. They went to Maine?

A. That is right.

Q. The Secretary did not hear this question.

A. There was not at the beginning. I heard some of the Faculty Committee people were quite favorably impressed with Elliott. Not unanimous, but quite impressed.

(There was some discussion of Cosmos Club meeting with Ellison and why if they were unfavorably impressed with Elliott, it was not brought out at the June 7 meeting of the Assembly.)

Q. The Secretary did not hear this question.

A. Just the comments he made.

(There was a statement about "Tom Brown's having received applause at the end of his statement. Morris did not recall it and their (the two Trustees) thinking that probably it came when Mr. Brown said the Faculty would abide by the decision of the Board, etc.)

A. Dean Burns said he did not know about that.

Q. Did they have other evidence of objections on the part of the Faculty to Elliott?

A. Thirteen deans signed the memorandum that of the three people reported to be under active consideration - Brown, Elliott and Cole - Brown's qualifications were superior.

Q. Professor Davison said they had met with Elliott on the 28th of May. There was a question of his lack of education and fundamental qualifications and you thought you should communicate your point of view?

A. This was written at the meeting on the ~~fourth or fifth~~ <sup>first of June</sup>. The memorandum was dated at the time of the meeting.

Q. It was not delivered until June 1?

A. The meeting of the Deans with Elliott was the 28th of May, then over the weekend some of us were talking and the meeting was called. I believe that Monday, the 31st or June 1st would be the date.

Q. The Faculty and the deans fully communicated their impressions to the Board and their opinions were so lightly valued or so little understood, that the Board did not give the Faculty the benefit of their own information. They should have prepared the Faculty Committee for it. Would this have helped any?

A. It might have. They were aware of the persons who signed the letter and the memorandum. If they had postponed action for a week or two and made clear the reasons why they were in favor of Elliott, it might have had an impact but as it was, it was just brushing aside faculty opinion and taking action.

Q. Mr. Morris and Mr. Phillips were very surprised at the Faculty reactions.

A. They are insensitive men then.

Q. If the Trustees were sold on Elliott and came to a decision, why was no effort made to persuade them as the Trustees would not meet again until October?

Professor Davison said that ~~Stevens~~ <sup>deans apparently wanted</sup> needed him to get the Admiral out and Brown in. Mr. Ellison complained of how many communications had come to the Trustees from all people. He was appalled at all the communications he received on J. A. Brown, and he suggested they should have gone through the Faculty Committee. There is a question that your committee undercut the Faculty Committee. This trustee said he was antagonized by all this pressure.

A. At the meeting with Mr. Ellison in February or March. At that meeting which he called, he mentioned the manner in which J. A. Brown was named Dean of Faculties and he expressed resentment at the way in which it was done. It was brought out to him that it was, after all, President Carroll's decision, and just because he was irritated at President Carroll's method of doing this, was no reason to carry over to Brown.

Mr. McKelway also mentioned this when three or four of us met with him. He talked about the irregular character of the appointment and his irritation with it, but it should not carry over to J. A. Brown.

Q. A great disservice was done to J. A. Brown by his friends. You would not know about unauthorized approaches.

A. I know of one person who said he wrote directly to the Board. When I wrote *about* ~~to~~ him, I wrote to the Faculty Committee.

Q. Morris said he did not have absolute power.

A. Evidently he did though because the action was taken.

Q. We have heard that the two persons who attended the Board meeting <sup>and spoke</sup> made very sincere and detailed reports except that Professor Schmidt's account was a little lengthy.

A. ~~Next morning~~ I had a phone call after the Board meeting from one of the members of the Board and he said the presentation of Tom Brown was excellent. The presentation by the second member was so rambling and gossipy and related to hearsay that it had the opposite effect. It made the people somewhat more sympathetic to Elliott than they were before. This man was strongly in favor of Brown. Jackie Coghnan was ready to vote for Brown but she did not.

(Professor Davison talked briefly about lack of rapport between the Faculty Committee and the Trustees Committee.)

Q. Have you any suggestions that might improve this? Perhaps one committee comprised of Faculty and Trustees?

A. Something needs to be improved to have any effect at all. Perhaps a joint committee. It might work.

Q. Should the Faculty Code be revised to say that a President should not be chosen against the feelings of the Faculty.

A. Some might be irritated enough to approve it.

Q. Should we have the University Charter require alumni members and faculty members on the Board of Trustees?

A. I don't know of any universities who have this arrangement. I never heard of this.

Comment: About ten universities have such a thing.

Q. Do you think it would be well to have the Code amended that a President should only remain as long as he has the confidence of the Faculty?

A. How do you mean it would be manifest? <sup>ed?</sup> (~~The Secretary is not sure this is the correct answer to this question~~)

(Davison then said that the committee had recommended that Dr. Elliott be induced to come down here as soon as possible, have J. A. Brown and Elliott work out their differences. This has been approved by the Board.)

Dean Burns commented that we would just have to wait and see.

Q. Do you think it would be possible to get J. A. Brown to stay at the University.

A. Dean Burns thinks Mr. Brown would stay if his conference with Elliott suggests he can work with Elliott and if Elliott is willing to give him a reasonably free hand in the academic program of the University. I think he would have to feel that there is a probability that much of the program would be put into effect.

Professor Wood said if this should work <sup>out</sup> ~~act~~, there would be an inborn type of rivalry and try as he might (he was waiting to pick up the pieces).

(There was some talk for a moment about Mr. Brown's self-control being remarkable.)

Dean Burns said he would regard any recommendation by this committee with the intention of Brown's appointment as Provost as a very difficult thing ~~to do~~.

Dean Burns said it seemed to him that President Elliott will need all the help and experience possible to do his job effectively. Brown has this experience. It would be to Elliott's advantage to have Brown stay. That is, if they can be congenial. There is no personal animosity because they don't know each other.

Dean Burns said he had not heard anyone say that the position the deans took should harm them in the eyes of President Elliott. After all, the letter that went to the Trustees was signed before Elliott was a serious candidate.

(There was a short general discussion which was not to be a part of this record.)